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ABSTRACT

A survey of recent literature on global education and observations of actual global education programs reveal that there is a wide gap between how global education is viewed in the abstract and how it is actually practiced. The argument is made that the nature, conduct, and purpose of schools are in conflict with the goals to which global education aspires. Changes in the basic structure of schools are necessary if global education is to truly flourish. A 37-item list of references is included. (DB)

# IF THE WORLD IS ROUND, AND SCHOOL IS FLAT, CAN WE HAVE GLOBAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS?

## Contradictions, Questions and Paradoxes of Global Education in Schools



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Over the past decade concern for "global education" has grown among those interested in school reform. Numerous articles have been published, programs have been established in many school districts, and the American Forum Inc. is sponsoring a national model schools network. We believe that although the movement has been growing for some time a number of critical areas have yet to be fully considered. We believe that the long term success or failure of global education may stand or fall on these relatively unconsidered concerns.

This series of papers will attempt to tie together information from a variety of sources which we believe impact global education. This first paper concerns itself with how global education is represented in the literature, the nature extant of global education programs, and the disjuncture between what schools can accomplish given their current status and the goals of global education. The second paper in this set will look at how we may come to understand the ways teachers work, and at teaching as both a profession and a highly structured restrictive job, particularly in the context of global education initiatives. The third paper will document a specific global education initiative within the context of these concerns. Our title suggests our concerns; are global educators and public schools even operating within in the same paradigm of how the universe fits together?

## Can Global Education Take Place in Schools?

The National Council for the Social Studies defines global education as

> efforts to cultivate in young people a perspective of the world which empahasizes the interconnection among cultures, species, and in the planet. The purpose of global education is to develop in youth the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to live effectively in a world possessing limited natural resources and characterized by ethnic diversity, cultural pluralism and increasing interdependence (NCSS, 1981).

Other writers suggest more specific agendas for global education. Cleveland (1986) suggests students have "a feel for" as opposed to knowledge about, "basic human needs, global change, national security, the way the world economy works, cooperation and consent building, cultural diversity and political pluralism, and the nature of leadership" (p.417). Lamy (1986) suggests sixteen separate competencies which global education should develop whereas Anderson (1979) suggests four types of competencies including "Awareness of involvement in the world system, decision making, judgement making and the exercise of influence." Hanvey (1978) lists five dimensions of what he calls "an attainable global perspective". These include "perspective consciousness, state of the planet awareness, cross cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices".

Another group of writers define global education in terms of school curriculum and its organization. Kniep (1986) believes that a global education can only be defined

by its content. He suggests that a global education would consist of the study of human values, the study of global systems, the study of global issues and problems and the study of global history. Riggle (1989) suggests the study of human ecology as a focus for global education. LeSourd (1989) has studied how an expository teaching model helps students learn about unfamiliar cultural beliefs. Torney-Purta (1989) has studied how students perceptions of relationships change following global education activities.

The light all of these writers shed on global education still fails to illuminate the school context in which achievement of these competencies, or understanding of this content, takes place. If we are to be "wide awake" as suggested by Maxine Green (1978), we must consider how this larger context effects our work. McLuhan's infamous statement "The medium is the massage", Dewey's notion that we learn what we do, and Fersh (1974) who notes that process and content are identical, force us to look at the interrelationship of what we do with what we claim to achieve as we think about global education.

Eisner (1990) describes what is often called the "hidden curriculum" by noting

> The content of a student's experience is shaped not only by the explicit curriculum, but by the kind of place any particular school is. And that is influenced by the way teachers roles are defined, by the way students are rewarded, and by the priorities the school sets (p.524).

The hidden curricula and agendas as well as the explicit curricula and agendas of American schools cause

many critics to see schools more as instruments of order and control than of education. (Apple and Weiss, 1983; Eisner, 1988). Others note that schools are often used to maintain the status quo, rather than being truly educative institutions (Goodlad, 1979; Shukar, 1983). Cuban (1990) notes that "schools perform the social functions assigned by the reigning ideologies and elite classes" (p. 10).

Goodlad (1984) makes the following pertinent observations.

> From the beginning students experience school and classroom environments that condition them in ... seeking right answers, conforming and producing the known. These behaviors are reinforced daily by the physical restraints of the group and the classroom, by the kinds of questions teachers ask, by the nature of the seatwork exercises assigned and by the format of tests and quizzes. They are further reinforced by the nature of the rewards -- particularly the subtleties of implicitly accepting 'right' answers and behaviors while ignoring or otherwise rejecting 'wrong' or deviant ones. (p. 241)

The case studies conducted in Math, Science, and Social Science Education for the National Science Foundation in the late seventies reveal a similar pattern noting that the basic system of classroom organization consists of "teacher made assignments, pupils focusing on teacher expectations, teacher control of classroom activities, pupil demands that teachers give assignments and enforce doing them and teacher demands that students do their assignments" (Stake and Easley, 1978, p. 14:21). The early works of John Holt (1964) poignantly describe how children develop strategies for 'getting through' school which actively avoid thinking, and instead concentrate on pleasing the teacher and avoiding

embarrasssment. Hornstein's (1986) interviews with children reveal that the kinds of questions teachers ask can often lead to only one "correct" answer.

These descriptions suggest that the very nature (and some would add purpose) of schools is antithetical to the efficacy of global education. The following juxtapositions point to these problems.

ITEM: Cleveland (1986) suggests that students need to have a feel for cooperation and consent building. The above descriptions of schools as places of limited interaction and of structural rigidity leave little room for such activities. The recent interest in cooperative learning seems, on the surface, to address this question and Kneip (1989) sees this as a promising technique. Several literature reviews on global education and on cooperative learning indicate that cooperative learning approaches lead to better mastery, retention of material, and the transfer of concepts, generalizations and rules. (Kobus, 1983).

Unfortunately cooperative learning tasks cannot be removed from the culture of the school in which they take place. Students are still compared and rewarded by grades, schools are still places organized around following a set of pre-set rules. and cooperative learning tasks are still primarily defined and assigned by the teacher. The real message is "cooperate when I tell you to, within these time and task constraints, and reach this kind of conclusion. If you do what I ask you'll get a good grade."

Will students really get a feel for cooperation and consent building in such settings? The literature is mute on this subject. Are we really headed in the direction Cleveland suggests?

ITEM: Anderson (1979) suggests both "judgement" and the "exercise of influence" as goals of global education. But how can students learn to make judgements in settings where one is rewarded and punished respectively for right and wrong answers?

The current reform movement can arguably be see as limiting teachers influence or "de-skilling" teachers (McNeil, 1988) with mandated approaches to teaching, mandated curricula, and assessment based on these two mandates. A teacher interviewed about her involvement with the Hunter Clinical Supervision model noted "It's very clear that my ideas aren't worth anything"(Garman nd Hazu, 1988 p. 671) The data suggest that such attitudes are not rare. McNeill(1988) also suggests that "teachers tend to control their students in much the same way as they are controlled by administrators" (p.355). Can the exercise of influence in students develop under these circumstances?

ITEM: Hanvey (1978) speaks of the knowledge of global dynamics as an important perspective within global education. He suggests that students must be encouraged to imagine "the abortion of certain technologies" and that the readiness to do so will be

> ...facilitated by knowledge of alternatives. The need for nuclear energy, for example, rests on certain assumptions about the inevitability and sanctity of economic growth, and the availablity of alternate resources. These assumptions are not inviolate; we should be willing to entertain alternate assumptions.

Is entertaining alternatives possible in situations which are built on inviolate assumptions that are continually reinforced? Aren't inviolate assumptions about the nature of the world the order of the day in most schools? If schools are about maintaining the status quo, (Goodlad, 1979; Shukar, 1983) or about performing the "social functions assigned by the reigning ideologies and elite classes" (Cuban, 1990, p. 10) their real role is to help instill inviolate assumptions rather then imagining the possibility of alternatives.

Goodlad (1986) concludes

> To incorporate a global perspective into school teaching-content that reflects changing realities in the world, and the kinds of teaching that promote problem solving and and more active learning- requires a responsive school culture

Our data indicate that such a culture does not currently exist in schools. It is also abundantly clear that the current school reform movement is moving in directions which can only hinder development of such a culture. In many cases the accountability models enforced by states and school districts serve to de-skill and dis-empower teachers (McNeil, 1988; Garman and Hazi, 1988). It appears that goals of schools, as seen from the perspectives reviewed herein may be in direct opposition with the goals of global education.

## Can Teachers Create Global Education?

Many critics argue that reform of schools can only come through teachers (Sirotnik and Clark, 1988) but there is a concurrent body of research which suggests that the socialization, professionalism and education of teachers, combined with the ways in which teachers view their work precludes this from happening.

In a summary of the National Science Foundation studies cited previously Shaver, Davis and Helburn (1980) note that the teacher is the key to what can happen in any given classroom. Stodolsky (1988) on the other hand found that many teachers ignored even the most basic suggestions in their teacher's manuals and instead focused on reading the text and answering questions. The vast majority of the classrooms described by Hornstein (1986) mirror this same pattern by focusing on reading the textbook, answering questions and filling out worksheets. Goodlad (1986) describes the "passive, emotionally flat tone of classrooms as ...a characteristic of long standing" (p. 435). Sirotnik (1983) describes the tendency of teachers to teach as they themselves were taught. Densmore (1987) describes how the young teachers in her case studies view professionalism as "adherence to accepted institutional norms" or "being a school representative and defending the curriculum" (p. 144). She goes on to note that teachers have never been in a position to develop professional goals separate from the school systems' objectives.

McNeill (1988) documents how teachers oversimplfy and/or mystify content in order to avoid controversy, to control students, and fulfill administrative mandates in spite of the teacher's own insight or knowledge in the subject. Eisner describes how efforts to standardize curricula have undermined "the importance of genuinely meaningful learning" (p. 26). Goodlad (1986) describes the content of schools as "scraps left other from other (human) conversations, neatly packaged in doggie bags, but scraps nonethless" (p.424).

Can global education as characterized herein exist in such settings? Again, the following juxtapositions point to problems.

ITEM: Hanvey suggests students learn three principles of change 1) things ramify, 2) there are no side effects but there are surprise effects, 3) look for concealed wiring. This implies that the choices we make and actions we take have effects in a variety of ways beyond the areas in which they are initially intended; that all effects are a part of the total system, whether we expected them or not; and that there may be forces of which we are not aware which can effect the outcome of our actions. These are powerful ideas which can profoundly change the way we look at the world. and could easily be used to look at the school itself.

Conversly, McNeil (1988) describes the "deal" teachers make with students whereby teachers keep things simple in order to obtain minimal cooperation from students. This is

done by fragmenting the information by teaching it from lists of terms and dates, by "mystifying" the data or making it seem impossible to understand, by omission of information which may lead to controversy, discussion or alternate conclusions, or by suggesting a very "simple, clear cut way to approach the topic" (p. 437).

Given this data is it likely that many teachers would want their students to understand Hanvey's ideas in more than a cursory manner? Would putting the three principles of change into a list or outline suffice? The possibilities for Hanveys approach being taught in schools are limited because it is powerful, because it causes us to look at the world through different eyes, and because it doesn't pre-suppose answers. Would many of McNeils' teachers be willing to deal with this topic?

ITEM: Anderson (1978) calls for decision making, judgement making, and exercise of influence. Given the previously described data can we reasonably expect teachers to create situations in which these competencies can grow? They are not the norm in schools now. The research suggests that most classrooms are based on teacher control, on students doing what the teacher says and learning some of what the teacher presents, and on students being reward or punished as a consequence of their actions or their success or failure at learning (Goodlad, 1984; Shukar, 1983; Cuban, 1990; Holt, 1964; Stake and Easley, 1980; Hornstein, 1986; McNeil, 1988). Given the tendency of schools to replicate

themselves (Sirotnik, 1983) is it likely that a change which afforded students the opportunity to make substantial judgements and decisions and to exert influence could take place?

ITEM: Kneip (1989) calls for the the content to a global education to be the study of human values, the study of global systems, the study of global issues and problems and the study of global history. If teachers mystify, oversimplify and avoid information, can the studies Kneip suggests really take place? If they do take place are students likely to be actively engaged with the topics? Do the outlines and lists of terms McNeil describes as typical teaching techniques serve this purpose? Would any purpose be served by teaching this content from outlines or by lists?

## Global Education in Action

A look at what happens in schools under the rubric of global education mirrors these concerns and convinces me that schools are indeed flat.

In one of the schools in which I work a unit on Germany is presented third grade. Although these activities are typically described as social studies rather than global education, they serve the same goal of international understanding.

During the unit on Germany students typically build castles, and read fairy tales by the Grimm Brothers. The

unit culminates with an assembly during which students dress up as a character from one of the fairy tales and the castles are on display. Last year at the assembly a sign at the entrance to the gym proclaimed "what we learned." The list consisted of the following three items:

1) Germany has friendly people.

2) There are many castles in Germany.

3) The Brothers Grimm come from Germany. They wrote many fairy tales.

At the assembly a number of the "robbers" from the Grimms' fairy tales wore ski masks. One carried a toy Uzi!

In talking to the teachers about the unit I discovered that they did it this way "because it's in the curriculum guide and the kids like it." No one questioned the purpose or outcomes of the unit nor did anyone question its usefulness.

I know that similar scenes are played out throughout this district. I suspect that this differs from what happens in many districts only in that the children had active hands-on involvement in some of the tasks.

The teachers involved here are all veteran teachers, two have master's degrees, and the other two are graduate students in the master's program at my own institution. If this is the perspective of teachers, how are we to develop a larger world view in students?

There is much data to suggest that similar activities are standard fare in many schools (Goodlad, 1984; Shaver,

Davis and Helburn, 1980; Hornstein, 1986; DeKock and Paul, 1989). One of my colleagues describes two typical approaches to global education; the "its a small world approach" where we are all the same and real issues are submerged (a form of defensive simplification), and the "Bongo of the Congo" (also known as the pinatas and tortillas) approach (O'Toole, 1990) whereby we look at the "weird and wonderful" things foreigners do. Can such approaches really be called global education? Do they meet any of the goals described previosly?

Even activities which are more consciously aimed at fostering diversity are similary shallow. A recent issue of Social Studies and the Young Learner included a section on activities for appreciating diversity (Lindquist, 1989). These activities included making a world wonder ball to hang in the classroom "to help you respect the wonders the Lakota respect in this world" (p.1), suggesting book titles and giving other students handmade bookmarks as a part of a Kwanzaa celebration, cutting out a picture of Daruma-san (a Japanese good luck symbol) and coloring in one eye with the other to be colored in when a goal is achieved, and a worksheet for matching Chinese characters and their literal meanings with corresponding English terms. There are many handbooks of such activities for global education available.

Such materials do not reflect a lack of growth or understanding on the part of teachers or curriculum developers. Rather, they reflect a profound understanding

of the limits of our current schools. These activities are about getting the content covered. They're not really about understanding at all except to understand that covering the content is all that matters; the medium is the message!

The same is the case with the global education initiatives currently happening in schools. One such program does attempt to have students examine current issues such as human rights or pollution, or examining the perspective found in newspapers (DeKock and Paul, 1985). Cogan (1978) describes schools which operate on themes such as " Its a Small World After all" and Morris (1979) describes schools with rooms representing different cultures which students can visit.

Students in these programs probably learn more facts about the world. However, it is what these descriptions leave out which speaks to me louder than what was included. There is no discussion of a change in the basic function of the school nor is there any attention to issues beyond content. Students may "know" new things and maybe able to parrot certain concerns but isn't this still the same as what has always happened? Aren't kids still simply regurgitating what the teacher has told them and deemed important? Does this constitute a global education?

The documentation of one of the projects in the American Forum's model schools network reveals the same limitations. A mission statement has been developed, a strategic plan is in development and then global concerns

will be written into the curriculum (Hoffbauer and Hornstein, 1990). The larger issues have not even been raised.

## Conclusions

The decks are stacked against the success of global education. From this perspective, the nature, conduct and purpose of schools are antithetical to the goals to which a global education aspires. This is not to imply that such goals are unimportant, they are vital to our continued survival. The problem is that our schools are not set u' to do these things and, as the next paper in this series will argue, the profession of teaching has been flattened by the bulldozer of professional administrative order. The world is round, but school is flat.

Cuban (1990) suggests that school reform efforts reflect the changes in values in society at large. The growing concern for global education indicates a concern for the larger issues of interdependence and international understanding. The practice of global education in schools, and the nature of schools themselves suggest only a concern for content knowledge and conformity. Cuban (1990) sees these contradictions as a part of a familiar clash between "deeply held values about how teachers should teach, the role of content in the classroom, and about how children learn" (p. 3). The paradoxes within global education reflect this conflict.

Using Hanvey's principles of change to look at global education underline these problems. "Things Ramify"; what might be the ramifications of teaching as we do? The structure of schools does affect what students learn, both formally and informally. "There are no side affects, there are surprise effects" (p. 10). Surprise effects might include a decrease in democratic values, as suggested by one international study (Torney, 1979), or a further crystalization of inviolate assumptions. "Look for hidden wiring" (Hanvey, 1978, p. 10). Some scholars would submit that the crystalization of inviolate assumptions and a reduction in democratic values are exactly our goals!!

On the other hand let's suppose for a moment that we could achieve the goals of global education as described herein. Ramifications could include a change in the basic structure of schools, changes in teacher education, and a different orientation toward information. Surprise effects could include changes in the ways we relate to other nations, changes in the economic status quo, and the fall of formerly inviolate assumptions about profit, cheap labor, or international trade. We need to look to the "hidden wiring" and ask the questions; Is this what we really want? Are we, as a society, ready for changes of this magnitude? Or are schools already giving us exactly what we really want? We must more thoroughly consider these types of questions if we really wish to have global education. We need to decide if we wish to consider the world flat in order to match our

schools, or if we wish to make schools round in order to match a round world.

The next paper in this series will look at how the concept of teacher professionalism impacts global education and reflects these contradictions. The final paper will look at how one of the programs in the American Forums' model schools network in the context of these concerns.

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